



**POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES**  
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**NEW YORK GIANTS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023 • CAESARS SUPERDOME**  
**SAINTS GAME NOTES**

- The Saints defeated the Giants 24-6, evening their record at 7-7. New Orleans is in a tie for first place in the NFC South with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.
- With the win, they improved their record at the Caesars Superdome in 2023 to 4-3 and their all-time home record to 220-220-1.
- They improved their all-time record against New York to 15-17 and their home mark against the Giants to 10-5.
- With another stellar defensive performance, the Saints have allowed fewer than 300 net passing yards in 40 consecutive contests, dating back to November 14, 2021 at Tennessee, the 40 games being the current longest active streak in the NFL and the longest since 52 consecutive games by Indianapolis from 2005-08. After holding the Giants to just 133 yards of net passing, the streak extended to 40 games and is tied for third in franchise history with a run from December 13, 1995-October 4, 1998.
- The Black and Gold's defensive front wreaked havoc against the Giants and rookie QB **Tommy DeVito**, setting a season-high with seven sacks on the afternoon.
- The Saints converted 6-of-12 third down attempts (50%) while holding New York to just 2-of-16 (12.5%).
- New Orleans managed 296 total net yards offensively and held the Giants to just 193 on the afternoon.
- This was the second consecutive contest and fourth in 2023 that the Saints have not surrendered a touchdown. New Orleans is the only NFL team to not give up a touchdown in four contests in 2023. They have not given up a touchdown in two consecutive contests for the second time in three seasons. It is the first time the Saints have not given up a touchdown in four games in a season since the 1991 and 1988 seasons, when they held opponents without a touchdown in five contests.
- The Saints were effective against the run, holding standout RB **Saquon Barkley** to 14 yards rushing on nine carries.
- QB **Derek Carr** finished 23-of-28 for 218 yards and three touchdown passes. Carr had season-highs in completion percentage (82.1%), touchdown passes (three), and quarterback rating (134.8).
- Carr's three scores through the air puts his career touchdown total at 233, surpassing Pro Football Hall of Famer Steve Young for 34<sup>th</sup> place in league record books.
- His 23 completions Sunday moved him into the top 20 in league history with 3,503 in his career, surpassing former Saint and Giant Kerry Collins.
- Now at 38,320 passing yards for his career, Carr surpassed Dave Krieg for 26<sup>th</sup> place (38,147).
- With 3,098 passing yards in 2023, Carr joined Peyton Manning (1998-2010) and Russell Wilson (2012-21) as only the third quarterback to pass for 3,000 yards in each of his first ten seasons.

- RB **Alvin Kamara** had another 100 plus yards from scrimmage day, finishing with 110 as he led the Saints in both rushing yards (66) and receiving with a game-high five receptions for a team-best 44 receiving yards.
- With five grabs, Kamara's career receptions total is now 498 and ranks 17<sup>th</sup> all-time among running backs. With 68 catches in 2023, it is his sixth campaign with at least 65 receptions joining WR Marques Colston (seven) as only the second Saint to do so
- TE **Jimmy Graham** caught a seven-yard touchdown strike from Carr in the fourth quarter, his third straight game with a touchdown grab. It marks the first time Graham has scored in three straight contests since he did so in four straight from 11/9/17-12/3/17 with the Seattle Seahawks.
- With the score, Graham now has 89 career touchdown receptions and surpassed Pro Football Hall of Fame WR Don Maynard for 16<sup>th</sup> in NFL history.
- TE **Juwan Johnson** added two grabs for 38 yards, including the longest reception of the day for the Saints offense, a 23-yard touchdown pass from Carr.
- WR **Keith Kirkwood** found the end zone as well for New Orleans on a seven-yard pass in the first quarter. It was his first regular season touchdown since a 30-yard strike from former Saints QB Drew Brees at Dallas on 11/29/18.
- LB **Demario Davis** led a stout New Orleans defensive performance, totaling a game high 10 stops, two stops for loss, and a sack. The ten tackles pushed his season total to 102, marking his tenth season with at least 100 stops, seventh consecutive campaign, sixth overall and sixth straight as a Saint.
- With his takedown on Sunday, Davis tied his career-high of 6.5 sacks set in 2022.
- DE **Tanoh Kpassagnon** had his most productive game as a Saint against the Giants, finishing with a career-high three sacks and six tackles.
- Rookie DL **Bryan Breese** also added two sacks of his own and three stops.
- DE **Carl Granderson** came up with another sack against New York, pushing his career-high to 7.5 quarterback takedowns in 2023 and remaining as the team leader.
- CB **Isaac Yiadom** totaled three stops and a game-high three passes defended.
- DB **J.T. Gray** had a special teams stop on Sunday, pushing his season total to a team-leading ten coverage tackles in 2023. He reached double-digits for the fourth time in his career and for the third consecutive season. Gray joins San Francisco S George Odum (2020-2023) as only the second player with at least ten coverage stops each of the last three seasons. Gray also joins current Vice President of Player Development and former special teams ace Fred McAfee (2000-05), S Steve Gleason (2002-06), WR Courtney Roby (2009-12) and LB Marvin Mitchell (2007-10) as only the fifth Saint to have double-digit totals in four seasons since 1989 and joins those five players and S Je'Rod Cherry (1997-99) as well, as the sixth Saint to do so in three consecutive seasons since 1989.
- K **Blake Grupe** nailed a 50-yard field goal and all three extra point tries, pushing his season scoring total to 105 points and joining former Saints kicker Wil Lutz (2016) as only the second Saints rookie to score 100 points.
- P **Lou Hedley** dropped two punts inside the 20-yard line, including one downed at the eight-yard line to pin New York deep in their own territory in the fourth quarter.



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(Opening statement) “It was a good team win. All three phases contributed to the win. I thought some of our veteran players stepped up and played really well in the game. I was proud of our guys to come out and play the way they did today. Now, we have to get ready on a short week to fly out to L.A. and play against the Rams.”

(On if this is the best the team has looked across this season) “I thought our guys played well, offensively, defensively and the kicking game, I thought all three phases. There have been a couple other games – New England, whatever—where I feel like we put a complete game together. I do feel like this was a complete game for our team.”

(On playing the entire game with the lead) “It was good. To be able to play with a lead for the entire game, that was good for our team. Our team’s battled adversity and had to play from behind. For this game to start off with the lead, I thought that was good for our team. In third down, we were 6-of-11. They were 2-of-16 on third down. I thought that was a big factor in the game. Our red zone offense, again, we were two-of-two down there in the red area. Some things we said we need to get better at and improve on, we’ve done that.”

(On what clicked this week to have a complete game): “We have a good veteran group, and they understand what’s at stake. They had a good week of practice and went out and played well. I thought some guys had to step up—Landon Young having to step up to replace Ryan Ramczyk. Overall, I thought the protection was really good. I don’t know if I’m going to get any questions about the quarterback [Derek Carr] this week, but I thought the quarterback played really well. Make sure we get that on record. It was an effective game in all three phases.”

(On if this is the best game Carr has played all season) “Probably statistically. 218 yards. No one’s jumping off the table with 218 yards but three touchdowns, no interceptions. I thought the protection, again, was outstanding in the game and gave (Carr) some opportunities to get the ball down the field. 134 (134.8) quarterback rating. I thought he played well, and the players around him played well.”

(On the pass rush today) “Without really getting the chance to look at the tape, it is hard for me to say exactly. I thought our guys did a good job of understanding rush-lane integrity and how we had to rush this quarterback [Tommy DeVito]. When we did get him off the spot, guys were able to finish and get him on the group. I think that’s really been the biggest difference when you look at the last two weeks. We’ve been able to finish much better on the quarterback when we’ve been able to get him off the spot. Certainly, this was probably our best day in terms of being able to get after the quarterback and being able to finish on the quarterback.

(On if plan and approach changed this week): “We had a significant amount of pressure. We had some four-man rush. We mixed our packages up just a little bit. Look, I thought we did some things on first and second down too where were able to affect the quarterback a little bit. I think on the back end, our guys for the most part-- They had a couple of plays in the last two-minute drive where the quarterback [DeVito] kind of extended a little bit and was able to find some guys late down the field. Overall, our ability to eliminate shots down the field was really good for us defensively.”

(On if rhythm exists on defense): “I think momentum is a real thing. Confidence breeds confidence. When you go out there and make some plays you become more confident. Then, you tend to make more plays, which makes you more confident. I thought both sides of the ball had a little bit of that (going) about.”

(On the criticism of Carr) “I just think it’s unfair, my personal opinion. I know everybody’s got the right to their own opinion. I thought (Carr) played really well in this game. Just like with everything else when you play that position, you are going to get your fair share of criticism. When someone plays really well, we need to recognize that he played well.”

(On if the team played with a sense of urgency from start to finish) “Yeah, I did. It was a good game for us.”

(On Alontae Taylor’s personal foul penalty) “I really did not ask. I didn’t agree with the call. I was more expressing my feelings than asking what they saw on the call. It was a big play in the game though, really. When you really look at it, that’s a big play.”

(On Carr’s toughness) “I think he is mentally and physically tough, I do. I thought he stepped up today and made some plays and some throws. Obviously, it was not perfect. There are some plays that

could have been better. I thought some guys made some plays for him, too. There are 11 guys on the field on every single play and nobody does it by themselves. I thought the protection was really good in the game. I thought guys made some plays down the field when they had opportunities too. I thought Derek was doing a good job of getting through his reads and getting the ball to the right people.”

(On the young receivers’ play) “That’s part of what this league is. Young guys are going to have to step up and make plays. I think on the long yardage situation with A.T. Perry being able to catch the ball – Again, that doesn’t happen if you don’t have good protection because it takes a little bit of time to get down the field—I thought he ran a good route, came back to the ball, caught it, was able to get north and south and advance it and was able to get the first down, which was a big play.”

(On how close Chris Olave was to playing) “My plan was see where (Olave) was at this morning. If he felt good enough, I was going to get him out on the field and work him out. As he got here this morning, I don’t think he felt like he was going to be able to go out and do the things he needed to do to be effective. Particularly with us playing a Thursday night game, trying to get him healthy and get him back in for that game went into that decision a little bit.”

(On if the lack of practice went into the decision for Olave not to play) “I wouldn’t say that we’re going to try to make a habit of guys not practicing and then getting out there on the field and playing, but I felt like if he was able to go and he was able to provide something for us, even in a limited role, he was the option I thought gave us the best chance to win.”

(On getting the tight ends involved) “Generally, when you face a team that’s got a lot of exotic looks and things of that nature, it kind of calms down a little bit when you put a bigger grouping on the field. I think that was part of the game plan to see what we were getting. As we got into the game, I felt like there were some things we could do to have some success.”

(On Juwan Johnson and Jimmy Graham) “I thought it was awesome to see him (Johnson) go and make that play. Obviously, the goal line play down there to Jimmy (Graham) from the half-yard line was a big play. I thought our tight ends stepped up and played well in the game.

(On the defense not allowing a touchdown) “We’ve played better the last two weeks. You’re really only as good as your last outing. We need to go back and make whatever the corrections are that we need to make from this game and get ready for a really good LA Rams team.”

(On Keith Kirkwood) “He is a guy that – he has kind of been up, he has been down, he has been back up. He comes to work every single day and works his tail off. He’s appreciative of every opportunity he receives. For him to get an opportunity to go out there and make some plays is good to see.”



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(On what went wrong today for his team) “Collectively, just not good enough. Pretty much take any area, (it) just wasn’t good enough. Give them (the Saints) credit. They did well. (They) were efficient in the pass game. We weren’t really efficient in the pass game. The run, the quarterback zone reads where really all of that was going...I think was 9 for 14, or somewhere around there. We couldn’t get the run game going, had a number of sacks (allowed). They were pretty efficient, 6 of 12 on third down and 2 of 2 in the red zone. So, collectively, it just wasn’t good enough.”

(On the play of the coverage team not being as good today) “Nothing was where it needed to be today.”

(On if the Saints did anything differently to defend Tommy DeVito) “They played well. They stopped the run. (They) were effective in the pass coverages. We had a couple of drops out there early that, I thought, could’ve helped us. Overall, (it was) not good enough.”

(On why the stunts from the Saints gave the Giants trouble) “They did a good job running them, and we didn’t do a good enough job blocking them.”

(On the momentum swings in the game in the first half) “Yeah, it was 7-6. Jamie (Gillan) hit that field goal. Again, they did a better job than we did all of the way around.”

(On Tommy DeVito not being able to escape pressure like in the last game) “I think that it’s different. There’s different rushes (each game). Every game is a little bit different. Like I said, not good enough all of the way around.”

(On not being able to generate much pressure today) “They did a good job blocking us. They stayed on schedule. When you stay on schedule, there are better chances offensively. They were. I thought that (Derek) Carr did a great job. (He was) 23 of 28 or something like that. (He) was very efficient (and) effective. He got the ball out of his hands. (They) hit a couple of big ones. They did a good job. Give them credit.”

(On if the message to the team is that there is still a chance for them to make the playoffs) “Yeah, we are all pros. You get ready to play. You get ready to play the next week. That is our job. We will look forward to the opportunity to play next week.”

(On how long Randy Bullock may be out) “No, I don’t know.”

(On what the team would have done had Jamie Gillan had to exit the game then) “We talked about it at halftime. It almost got to that point, but Jamie toughed it out.”

(On if he thought that Gillan could kick) “Yes, he did it in the preseason last year. You don’t anticipate two guys possibly going down. So, give him credit, He fought threw it. He kicked off. We will see where we are at.”

(On when Bullock injured himself) “I don’t know exactly when it was. He kicked the fifty something (56) yarder, and then they told me it was his hamstring.”



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#### S TYRANN MATHIEU

(On if the defensive effort was as good as it's been all season) "Yeah, I thought we did a great job in the run game, and then obviously the coverage and pass rush working together was great. We could have had a turnover or two, but overall, it was a great defensive game."

(On if any momentum has been built in the past two weeks) "We are still a confident team and a confident group. When you get to the back end of the season, you want to be able to play well and win games. A lot of times it doesn't matter how you win it, just that you get wins."

(On how the defensive rush helped the secondary today) "Those guys up front are really able to control the game. I also think we have a lot of guys on the back end that make it tough for any offense. If we play like the way we played today, we will be ready for whatever is in front of us."

(On how good Demario Davis has been) "He is one of our best players and one of our best leaders. We feed off of his energy, and he was really fired up today."

(On how him and Jordan Howden work well together) "I think we work really well together. We both do most of the same things, and he is still learning and growing. He is going to be great in this league for a long time, and it is really cool to have someone like that next to you."

(On Paulson Adebo) "Debo is a good player. He is smart, physical, active, and I think he is going to make a lot of plays in this league. He is the guy that we count on to hold up outside, and he has been doing a great job of that."

#### RB ALVIN KAMARA

(On 1,000 scrimmage yards every year he has been in the league) "I feel great. It feels good to still be able to go out there and be productive. I don't feel any older than when I came in the league. "

(On the team win today) "I think we played a complete game today. Special teams gunned them inside the 10 (yard line). The defense played amazing with Demario (Davis) and Tanoh (Kpassagnon) going out there and doing their thing. Then the offense, Derek (Carr) went out there and played great. We were able to come out with a big win."

(On Derek Carr's impressive game) "He was focused. He was extremely focused all week on the win and it showed. He really played a smooth game and did not try and force anything. That was one of his best games throwing the ball."

(On the offensive identity building) "These past two weeks have been good to go and put a stamp on the game. We put together a lot of positive yards, plays, and drives which help us score in the red zone and execute. We are definitely still building because we have more room to grow."

(On playing with a sizeable lead in the fourth quarter) "Anytime you go into the fourth with a lead like that it makes the game easy. You don't want to back off too much, but you still control the flow and take the game."

#### DE TANOH KPASSAGNON

(On if he thought the breakthrough was coming) "I definitely saw it coming. We have wanted results the past couple of weeks, and now we got them."

(On what the difference was for mobile QBs this game) "We have gotten pressure on quarterbacks, but we just kept tapping that rock. Eventually it is going to break, and today it broke. We were really able to finish today."

(On Dennis Allen's scheme and chemistry with his defensive line) "We have gotten really comfortable with each other because it was basically a brand new defensive line. Our chemistry has been building, and we just keep on tapping that rock."

(On stopping the run today) "Yeah. It is something we have been working on to try and get to the quarterback more. It is really why we got so many pressures and sacks today because we pumped the brakes on the running back."

(On Zach Baun and what he brings) “He is fast and athletic. It is a really cool thing to see in practice, and he is finally getting his opportunity to get pressures.”

## **QB DEREK CARR**

(On the offense being spread out today) “This game was really split with targets and guys’ numbers being called. With Chris Olave down, it was a game that everyone had to contribute. He is a great player and he is hard to replace, but everyone else’s workload gets bumped up. I’m really proud of the guys that stepped up. It wasn’t perfect, but they were running their routes, getting open, and they were efficient. When they needed to be where I was throwing, they were there. This is what I’ve always dreamed of.”

(On how important this game was for the offense) “It was the validation of the positivity we have been bringing (to work everyday). We don’t just show up on Sunday and play a game together. There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes. The last three weeks in the red zone, we have been so much better. We went 50% on third down today on that defense, and that’s definitely improvement. This performance is what we have earned.”

(On how this game felt for him personally) “It felt good, it really did. You always want to put your best foot forward no matter what you do. The hard work pays off, and as a team and an offense, it makes you happy. I just want to win here.”

(On how the protection was today) “It was unbelievable. I knew I was going to be tired after this one. The amount of personnel groups and checks you have to make against this defense is crazy. Ram (Ryan Ramczyk) is down, Landon (Young) stepped in, and Max (Garcia) went to the jumbo spot. There were so many moving parts, and I’m really proud of everyone. They did a fantastic job. “

(What he saw on the second touchdown pass to Juwan Johnson) “They were playing invert. I tried to pump and look him off over to Rashid (Shaheed), and it was great design by RC (Ronald Curry) and Pete (Carmichael). They put that route there because they knew that we would have a hole there. Very rarely does it happen like it does in practice but this time it did.”



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#### QB TOMMY DeVITO

(On why it was hard to get things going) “We were just hurting ourselves in certain situations, some penalties, just not good.”

(On the call to have him checked for a concussion) “Yeah, I guess they called from upstairs and said they had to check me but I felt good.”

(On if he felt the hit was clean) “I don't know. It's football.”

(On the difference from last week to today) “I think they did a good job defensively. Just their D-line just, I guess just watched their film from what happened last week. They're just ensuring that wasn't going to happen again. They did a good job and we'll be better on offense.”

(On what the Saints did differently to slow them down) “Nothing too crazy. We just lacked execution on offense. We weren't good on third downs. We have to be better. I don't think we played with enough swagger. I put that on me because I'm like, I take that personally, as far as playing with energy, playing with juice. So I need to be better with that.”

(On why there wasn't “swagger”) “I just feel like we kind of got in a little bit of a lull at times. I think it just goes with the execution part. But just keep the energy high at all times.”

(On the Saints defense sack celebrations) “I didn't know until you just said it but it comes what you see in all sports everything with someone just does something and something else happens or it's going to retaliate but it's all fun and games, part of game.”

(On the atmosphere in the Caesars Superdome) “Yeah, it was cool atmosphere, I can say that. Obviously first time in the stadium. We anticipating it being loud, so we practiced a lot of loud music, especially that one song that was played. So that was... it was fun in that aspect of the game. But as far as we learned, just being more efficient on third downs. (The) Quarterback's jobs (is) to stay on the field, score points. So I need to find ways to keep those routes going.”

(On the challenge of teams having more film on him now): “I think teams do that to everybody. I just so happened to play some more football, so I have some more film. But the NFL is not easy. It is not for everybody. But it's our job to go out there. It's part of the job description to go out there, be ready to play against what they have.”

(On Brian Daboll stating he's starting next week) “He believes in me. I'm going to continue to try to earn his trust and all that each play that I'm on the field.”

(On how he felt his performance was today) “Average. Two things I want back for sure. I guess I just need to be that spark for the offense and just get us to score points more.”

(On the two things) “Probably the first one of the game to (Darius) Slayton. And then one to (Darren) Waller on the right side in the fourth quarter.”

(On how critical he is of himself) “Very critical. I'm always harder on myself than anybody else but at the same time I'm realistic with myself. I don't want to try to beat myself up over things, but it's all learning experiences. A routine throw that I make 10 times out of 10 to Waller that I missed just cannot happen. So I'm going to beating myself up over that one for sure. But just watch the film, see what we could have done differently if I could have done anything different, then will go from there until next week.”

(On what he makes of the seven sacks) “It's a little bit of everything. I mean at times sometimes it's just the pressure look, sometimes it's a cover sack, sometimes I can get the ball out and I'd maybe just missed somebody. I mean it's all three of those that goes into it, I think I've said in the past just when we've had a couple other sack games just it's not just on the offensive line. It's not just on the quarterback, not just on the receivers kind of a different scenario every time.”

(On how hard it is to be taken off and taken to the locker room before going back in) “There was a little bumps in the road. I'll say just because I didn't get to have my halftime adjustments and all that and just like talk and just reset with the guys. But at the same time it's the job. You get thrown into it you're expected to play and do everything at your best which we got going at times, we just need to be more consistent.”



## **LB BOBBY OKEREKE**

(On how Derek Carr was running the Saints offense that made it difficult to stop) "He's a vet in this league and we didn't do a lot to get him off his rhythm. So, they were just executing. They were hitting their shots; they were hitting their check downs. Run game was bleeding on us. They just played a more complete game than we did."

(On not performing to expectations after a three-game win streak) "It is tough. It is just one game. We have three more left so we'll watch the film from this, get the corrections done and move onto the next."

(On if they felt like they had an opportunity to turn it around going into the second half) "Yeah we felt like we had an opportunity. Defensively we've been talking all week about embracing the challenge and really if we want to put our team in position to win it's got to be on us. Executing, creating turnovers, really just getting that momentum swinging coming out in the second half and having them go down and drive and score, that's not what we need. We just got to do better from that standpoint."

(On having no turnovers today and if they are sometimes just lucky): "Yeah it is just the flow of the game. But history tells if we get turnovers we'll win the game. So we just got to put an extra emphasis on that in practice, get out mindset right about that and we'll get a better result."